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What Kind of Independence Do We Offer in Southeast Asia?

Free Elections in Indochina Now? Mr. Dulles Says "No"

It would be foolish to imagine, because of the setbacks suffered by Mr. Dulles, that the danger of American intervention in Southeast Asia is over. The United States has almost always gone to war reluctantly, and after assurances by its leaders that they would keep us out of war. But the interventionists seem to manage ultimately to have their way, whether it be in a good cause or a bad.

As Republicans and Democrats begin to draw together in a revival of bipartisanship (see survey on page two) and the conditioning of the public mind for intervention is continued by the State Department, it would be well to focus attention on the question of "independence." Every war has to be a crusade. It must find a high purpose. The emotional mobilization requires some glittering conception as its center. The liberals and the idealists need its bright sheen to mesmerize themselves into the proper frame of mind for another outburst of human slaughter. The key concept in this case seems to be that of independence. All our liberals repeat that if only the French would give the Indochinese their independence . . . The implication is that this would make it a "good" war, a war in which we might join with clear conscience.

The Questions Nobody Faces

That there is something phoney in this is indicated by the fact that no one stops to analyze what independence means. An independent people has a right to determine its own destiny. But no one stops to ask what we should do if the Indochinese, on being set free by France, were to decide that they preferred peace to war, even at the expense of compromising with their own Communists. No one stops to ask what we should do if Indo-China, on becoming independent, were to establish a coalition regime. After all Bao Dai has been at various times the puppet of the French, the Japanese and of Ho Chi-minh himself. What if he were to settle for an Imperial throne over a coalition government? Or what if there were to be an election and Ho Chi-minh were to win? Everyone who knows Indochina seems to agree that Ho is regarded with reverence as a national hero even by his opponents.

We tried to draw Mr. Dulles out on these questions at his press conference last week, and believe his answers were revealing, though few if any papers reported them. We give them as he made them, except that we do so as required by State Department rules, in indirect discourse. The first question was whether the Secretary would favor genuinely free elections in Indochina. Mr. Dulles replied that he would favor genuinely free elections under conditions where there would be an opportunity for the electorate to be adequately informed as to what the issues are. At the present time, he continued, in a country which is politically immature, which has been the scene of civil war and disruption, he would doubt whether the immediate conditions would be conducive to a result which would really reflect the will of the people. His answer, in other words, was "No."

This, on reflection, is a bit puzzling. If those in rebel-held territories are victims of Communist oppression, as we insist they are, then surely they would vote against Ho in a genuinely free election. If the rest are menaced by aggression, as we insist they are, then they would surely vote against their aggressors in a genuinely free election. Here we are being asked to intervene and "save" the Indochinese—yet the Secretary of State is not sure that they want to be saved, i.e., that they would vote right if given a chance. On the other hand, if he regards them as politically immature—the phrase is his, as the official transcript will verify—then how does he differ from the French colonialists who think that Indo-China is part of their white man's burden?

The next question we put to Mr. Dulles was this: he had said it was government policy to oppose any Communist advance in Southeast Asia "by whatever means" achieved. What would be his attitude toward the victory of Ho or a coalition in a free election. Would he recognize such a government? Mr. Dulles ducked the question the first time but when it was pressed again he replied that he had just said that he did not think present conditions conducive to a free election there and he did not care to answer the hypothetical situation that might result if they did have elections.

Since Bao Dai for the Vietnamese is now proposing elections as a solution, the question is hardly hypothetical in any distant sense. It seems to me that the answers indicate that Mr. Dulles does not like the idea of free elections in Indochina and is not at all sure that the rebels would lose.

Just Like Eastern Germany?

A little later we put another question which followed naturally from what had already been said. We asked—Mr. Secretary, if you regard the Indochinese people as too immature politically for free elections, do you regard them as politically mature enough for independence at this time? Mr. Dulles replied that he did not say that the people were too immature for free elections. He asserted that he had said that conditions were not conducive to them. He went on to say that when we had the discussion of the possibility of having elections in the eastern part of Germany, it was

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Puncturing Some Delusions About A "Great Debate"

Democrats on Foreign Policy: Not A Voice for Peace

Capitol Hill—A week's burst of Democratic oratory on foreign policy has made clear (1) that the Democrats are not a peace party, (2) that they have no real foreign policy, and (3) that they are ready and eager to associate themselves with Eisenhower's, though neither they nor he seem to know just what that policy is.

The principal criticism made by the Democrats of the Republicans is that they have alienated our Western allies. But there is no indication that the Democrats are any more ready than the Republicans to amend the attitudes which created the rift. Mr. Dulles went to Geneva the way Mr. Acheson went to a whole series of conferences, ready to negotiate nothing but unconditional surrender.

If Mr. Dulles can be accused of "unilateralism," here too he was but carrying on the pattern. It was Mr. Acheson who (after private negotiations with Dr. Adenauer) sprang German rearmament on Britain and France in the autumn of 1950 without advance consultation. It was under Mr. Acheson's aegis that Mr. Dulles crammed an unpopular Japanese treaty and the prospect of Japanese rearmament down the throats of reluctant allies.

There was no indication in Democratic oratory of any readiness to see the British point of view on recognition of Communist China or any French view but M. Bidault's on Indo-China. The Democrats did not advocate negotiation, compromise or conciliation, and they talked by and large as if the Indo-Chinese war were a simple matter of Chinese aggression.

At the Jefferson-Jackson Day conference, Senator Gillette of Iowa said Mr. Dulles' hands at Geneva were tied, but he showed no readiness to untie them. "We could have hauled the Red aggressor before the bar of public opinion," Gillette said, "but we preferred to revert to outworn methods of military intervention." Senator Green of Rhode Island spoke of McCarthyism's bad influence on the foreign service but provided no line on policy. Texas Senator Lyndon Johnson's highly overrated speech derided Mr. Dulles for not standing up to the Communists at Geneva.

Humphrey Still Believes In Navarre

In the Senate next day Mansfield of Montana got up to say that "to withdraw now, to negotiate a settlement which would lay open all of Indochina to the conqueror's heel, would be to break faith with those of Dien Bien Phu who gave so much." Humphrey of Minnesota rose to commend him, saying "there is still time." "General Navarre," Humphrey said, "has a long range plan of military operations which, if given an opportunity to be worked out and put into effect, can and should lead to ultimate victory." Humphrey ended by saying, "I plead with the Administration to share its burden, to share its information, and to share its responsibility." The Democrats are ready to enlist.

Kefauver of Tennessee on Monday implied that if the Republicans had not been so critical of intervention in Korea it would have been easier for them to manage intervention in Indo-China. "Echoes of such phrases as 'Mr. Truman's war,'" he told the Senate, ". . . helped to make this great nation ineffective in dealing with the threat of Communist aggression in Indo-China."

One Republican, Flanders of Vermont, and the Independent, Morse of Oregon, joined in that day's assault. Flanders was incredibly confused. At one moment he praised the Colombo conference and in the next criticized Nehru for saying that in America every issue was seen in simple terms of "black and white." Nehru "must understand," Flanders said, illustrating the Indian's point beautifully, "that when the moral values are scorned and the souls of men are attacked there can be no neutrality."

Morse rose to say that it was "reassuring" to listen to all this "common sense." He said that "following Dulles would be following the Administration into war in Asia" but he himself is for military intervention in Indo-China if we can go in "as part of a United Nations program."

The prize for pathos goes to Smathers of Florida for the speech he made later that same afternoon. Smathers thought the time had come "to reinforce those ancient and honored but tired and worn allies of the Old World, with the vigorous, young forward looking nations of the New World." (Like Peron's Argentina?)

"While Dien Bien Phu," he told the Senate, "marks a point of despair, and Geneva makes us feel alone and naked before the world, when we come home and embrace again the friends and neighbors who surround us, we must admit a warm secure feeling." Not a single Senator rushed to the rail, so hardy are now the stomachs of the Conscript Fathers.

It was in the course of arguing for this alternative policy that Smathers committed what was probably the finest mixed metaphor in the history of the Senate, the world's richest source of these literary treasures. Smathers complained that Venezuela "one of the closest friends of the United States and a country which pays cash for what it needs" (how we love the bosom friends who pay cash!) had to buy destroyers recently from Britain although in this country "there are," Smathers observed solemnly, "acres of destroyers in moth balls."

Kennedy's "Ideal" Solution

Kennedy of Massachusetts, made a speech in Princeton Tuesday night in which he suggested that if Bidault's terms were rejected the ideal solution would be resumption of the war, and training of more native troops "with additional assistance by the United States," though it might be two years (he said) before these native troops were strong enough to allow French withdrawal. Kennedy urged larger defense appropriations and a greater air force and confessed "It is difficult for a Democrat not to rise to his feet and cheer when the President speaks of 'unleashing' Chiang Kai-shek . . ." Byrd of Virginia, in his speech here Monday night to the plumbing contractors, was the only one of these Democratic Senators to say that "as of now I am of the firm conviction that we should not become a fighting participant in the Indochina war." Even with him the "as of now" qualifies the "firm."

Mr. Truman's visit was pleasant; the man who seemed a pigmy after FDR seems a scholar statesman beside his successor. But his speech to the press club offered little on foreign policy beyond those cliches about partisan politics stopping at the water's edge. Bipartisanship in war may be patriotic and necessary, but bipartisanship on foreign policy in peace time means withdrawing from discussion and democratic decision the most fateful decisions of our time. Why should there be bipartisanship on the China question or on the H-bomb? The result is to leave national policy to be made by the State Department and the military bureaucracy.

Senator Knowland got in the last word on the Truman plea for bipartisanship when he recalled to the Senate last Friday that neither the Republican opposition nor the Democratic leadership was consulted by Mr. Truman in the making of the decisions which led to intervention in Korea.

Ready to Join "Ike's War"

Though the Republicans made much of "Truman's war" in the 1952 election, all the signs indicate that the Democrats will go along loyally and willingly with Ike's, any time he gets up nerve enough to take the plunge.

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Brownell's Developing Program for War and Fascism

Two New Police State Bills by Ike's Chief "Political Assassin"

Former President Truman referred to Attorney General Brownell as a "political assassin." The Attorney General came forward last week with two new police state bills, S. 3427 and S. 3428. These are (like the detention camp provisions of the Internal Security Act) in the developing pattern of legislation designed to punish people not for wrongful acts or even for ideas deemed wrongful but for acts they are held "likely to commit" some time in the future. Prospective guilt has not hitherto been an Anglo-American legal conception.

S. 3427 is to liquidate "Communist-controlled" corporations, labor unions or other organizations "which are in a position to affect adversely the national defense or security." The Internal Security Act already sets up the categories of "Communist action" and "Communist front" organizations. To this, the bill would add a third, "Communist-infiltrated" organizations. These may be thrown into liquidation by the Subversive Activities Control Board, without proof that they have ever done anything unlawful.

S. 3428 is designed to bar from industrial establishments "individuals believed to be disposed to commit acts of sabotage, espionage or other subversion," the last named term being as usual undefined. Brownell slickly explained that this bill by requiring "specific charges and hearings" guaranteed due process. But Section 3 (b) says nothing contained in the Act "shall be deemed to require any investigatory organization of the United States Government to disclose its informants or other information which in its judgment would endanger its investigatory activity." This means that as in loyalty cases the source and content of accusations may be withheld from the accused, leaving him to defend himself in the dark.

The loose charges and political mendacity for which Brownell has distinguished himself should be enough to put the Democrats on notice as to the danger of giving this man such extraordinary powers over people and institutions he may attack as "Communistic." But there is no sign that Democratic leadership in Congress has the nerve to oppose any legislation which purports to be against Communism. S. 3427 is thinly sugar-coated with a provision repealing the non-Communist oath provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act (as recommended last year by the House Un-American Activities Committee!) It is appalling that even so liberal a Democrat as Murray of Montana, in the debate which saw the defeat of the bill to amend the Taft-Hartley Act, criticized the amending legislation because it failed to do anything "about the problem of Communism in the labor unions." Brownell has now come forward with his own solution. The Butler bill would subject "communistic" unions to the Subversive Activities Control Board. Brownell would liquidate them altogether.

Contempt Charged Against Gold's Lawyer

Whether as another means of intimidating lawyers who defend radicals, or as backfire to the jury-tampering charges against the government in the Ben Gold case, the Department of Justice has initiated criminal contempt charges against Gold's counsel, Harold I. Cammer for sending a questionnaire to the grand jury which indicted Gold. Cammer's purpose was to determine the effect of the loyalty program on jurors who are Federal employes. The use of such questionnaires derives from the Dennis contempt case (339 U.S. 162) in which the Supreme Court refused to hold that a jury of government employes could not give a radical a fair trial but said "The way is open in every case to raise a contention of bias from the realm of speculation to that of fact." This meant that such jurors could be disqualified if the defense was able to prove that the atmosphere made fair consideration impossible.

A questionnaire was used by the defense in challenging the presence of Federal employes on the jury in the Case of Scientist X (Weinberg) last year. The defense in the Emspak case made a similar jury challenge. The government in opposing a hearing on the jury issue, argued "There is not the slightest indication in the long motion and offer of proof that an attempt had been made to interview a single one of the persons," i.e. of the grand jurors who indicted Emspak. Cammer is now charged with criminal contempt for doing in the Gold case what the government complained that defense counsel failed to do in the Emspak case.

Senate Testimony on How Easily Wire-Taps May Be "Forged"

Senators Told How A Famous Churchill Speech Was Distorted

Almost unnoticed, despite its sensational character, was the testimony given by Hon. Robert Coar, director, Joint House-Senate Radio Facility, U.S. Congress, on May 6 before the special subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee considering legislation to authorize the use of wire-taps as evidence. We give the most important portions here:

MR. COAR. Some 20 years ago I was District Plant Engineer for the New York Telephone Company, and in that capacity one of my assignments was to make searches for wire-taps . . . Subsequent to that, I have, prior to coming to Washington and shortly after . . . some 19 years ago, done some development work for the FBI in design of wire-tapping equipment. . . .

MR. COLLINS. Mr. Coar, when you play back and record the information obtained, can that tape recording be altered?

MR. COAR. Yes, I have a graphic demonstration of that . . . Simply by playing it back on to a plastic tape, recording on the tape and re-recording from the tape back to the wire, there is no way at all that anyone can tell that there have been changes made in what was on the original wire . . .

You may recall that when Winston Churchill addressed the House we made a tape recording of his speech, and he had just had some new teeth put in, and so the reporters missed some of it, and asked if they could come up and hear the recording of the tape.

You may recall that he said: "I came not to ask you for money. I came to ask for military aid. We English are putting out all we can towards this effort." And so on and so forth. Mr. Clark changed it around so that Mr. Churchill in very good voice and without any detecting it said: "I came here to ask you for money. The English do as they please. What we do with your money is our business."

So the reporters came in the room and started to take down this testimony and continued taking it down with a straight face, exactly as we had it on the tape. We stopped them after two or three minutes, because we knew they were busy. It just shows what can be done. And these people were right there in the Chamber when that was said. . . .

SENATOR WILEY. With all this scientific work that has been done you mean that there is no way to know that the second tape is phoney?

MR. COAR. That is right, sir.

SENATOR WILEY. Then it all goes to the question of the integrity of who is tapping the wire, the integrity of that fellow?

MR. COAR. That is right, sir. . . .

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The Familiar Answer to Colonial Aspiration Everywhere

Mr. Dulles Thinks Indochina Too Immature Politically

(*Continued from Page One*)

the plan—the so-called Eden plan—that the elections should not take place until there had been a preparatory period, because it was felt that the people were so terrorized, so misinformed that quick elections held there under existing conditions could not be expected accurately to reflect the real views of the people and their intelligent judgment. If we felt that way, Mr. Dulles concluded, as regards Eastern Germany, certainly we are entitled to feel the same as regards Indochina.

This reply will also bear study. We had been told that the people of Eastern Germany are so full of hate for the occupying power and their Communist puppets that only force holds them down. Under the circumstances, why should a preparatory period be necessary to register their "intelligent" judgment?

Says Bao Dai Doesn't Want Independence Now

Our final question was, then do you favor independence for Indochina at this time? The answer in effect was no. But we shall let Mr. Dulles give the answer his own way. He began by saying that he believed that their complete independence should be absolutely assured. But he continued by saying that now the question as to the exercising of complete independence is another matter. He said he had spoken to their representatives. He said he had a long talk with Bao Dai. They don't, any of them, Mr. Dulles continued, feel at the moment they would want the French to withdraw or want to sever their relations with the French Union because they know that there would have to be a transitory period during which they are able to build up the strength necessary to exercise independence.

Today, Mr. Dulles went on, if they attempted to be wholly independent and if the French were withdrawn, which is the Vietminh proposal, their independence would not last probably for more than a few days. And just as the United States would not have granted independence to the Philippines in the middle of the Second World War, it would be foolish to expect and in fact the governments of these countries do not expect, that they can instantly exercise full independence. But there should not be any doubt whatever, Mr. Dulles concluded, but what their independence is assured them under times and conditions so that they will actually be able to exercise it and enjoy it.

This is agile, if not succinct. The analogy with the Philippines is clever but specious and serves only to confuse. The Philippines were occupied by the Japanese in the middle of the Second World War. The analogy would be closer if in the Philippines we had been helping the Japanese and their war-time puppet government to hold the country against a popular resistance movement. In Indochina we have been supporting the occupying power, France, and its puppet, Bao Dai, against the resistance movement which fought first the Vichy French and then the Japanese during the war and the French since. In this context it is natural to fear, and correct to assume, that if Bao Dai, the puppet of these successive foreign powers, were cut adrift and real independence granted the country, his regime could not survive more than a few days. Popular sentiment is largely on Ho's side, and even on the far right against Bao Dai.

Mr. Dulles is against independence for Indochina or free elections there until he feels sure its people can be counted for "the free world." But it must seem to Asians an odd kind of free world that fears free elections and independence.

This talk of "political immaturity" is familiar in Asia. It has for many years been the answer of the West to every colonial demand for freedom. This is the language of Kipling, and Kipling is not exactly the Bible of any colored or colonial people. He is the poet laureate of white supremacy.

These answers by Mr. Dulles deserve a better fate than to gather dust in the State Department's files during the weeks ahead when we may be asked to send our sons to Indochina, to safeguard its "independence," and to preserve its "freedom." We ask our liberal friends, before they are sucked into the maelstrom of war emotion, are you prepared to defend Indochina's right to real independence, even if that means letting its people choose Ho Chi-minh over Bao Dai?

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